

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SOFIA 001339

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [BU](#)

SUBJECT: BULGARIA: OPPOSITION WALKOUT BLOCKS VOTE ON  
SOCIALIST-LED MINORITY GOVERNMENT

Ref: (A) SOFIA 1036, (B) SOFIA 1325, (C) SOFIA 1329

1. (SBU) SUMMARY. A coordinated walkout by every member of the opposition to Bulgaria's proposed Socialist-led government forced parliament to adjourn July 26 without voting on the new cabinet. While the Socialists and their junior coalition partner may still be in the race, their odds are significantly worse than they were yesterday. The BSP leadership and even President Purvanov were visibly shaken by the unexpectedly vociferous and united opposition to the proposed Socialist government. A new session to vote on the cabinet is scheduled for July 27 at 09:00 a.m. Judging by today's events, if the Socialist-led coalition does manage to squeak into government, it will have to fight hard for every vote in the legislative battles to come. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and its junior coalition partner, the mainly ethnic-Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), with only 116 MPs in the 240-seat parliament, are facing an unexpectedly difficult time garnering support for their proposed cabinet (Refs B, C). The Socialists, who unveiled the government line-up July 24, planned to request an anonymous vote in order to win support from individual MPs from other parties. However, the opposition -- outgoing PM Simeon Saxe-Coburg's party, three center-right groups and extreme nationalist party Ataka -- raised numerous procedural objections before finally abandoning the plenary hall. MPs from the BSP/MRF were thus left without the quorum needed to continue the session.

3. (SBU) The opposition said it walked out to protest the procedural moves of Parliament Speaker Georgi Pirinski, and they demanded his resignation. However, their unexpectedly united front today may have reinvigorated their determination to block the formation of this government at any cost.

4. (SBU) COMMENT. If the Socialists fail to win the July 27 vote, President Purvanov will ask Simeon's party, as the second biggest group in parliament, to form a government (Ref A). If this attempt fails, Bulgaria may face early elections, an outcome all parties agree would be a threat to the country's on-time EU accession. Early elections might also allow the extreme nationalist Ataka party to build on its current momentum. The Socialists will be undoubtedly highlight both threats before tomorrow's vote.